MARVEL COMICS
2099
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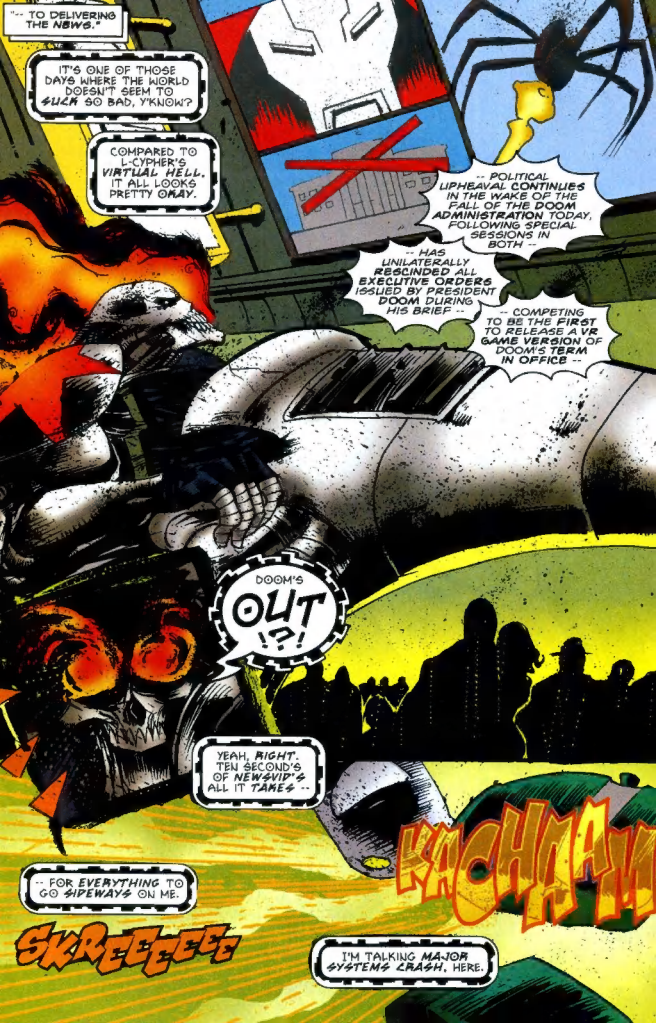
GHOST RIDER
2099 A.D.
DIRECT EDITION
02111 >
7 59606 01157 5
$1.95 US $2.75 CAN

GHOST RIDER 2099™ Vol. 1, No. 21, January, 1996. (USPS 011-665) Published by MARVEL COMICS Gerard Calabrese, President Stan Lee, Publisher OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016. SECOND CLASS POSTAGE PAID AT NEW YORK, NY AND AT ADDITIONAL MAILING OFFICES. Published monthly. Copyright © 1995 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved. Price $1.95 per copy in the U.S. and $2.75 in Canada. Subscription rates for 12 issues: $23.40 U.S., $35.40 foreign and Canadian subscribers must add $10.00 for postage and GST GST #R127022837. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. The periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold subject to the condition that it shall not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or markings removed, nor in a mutilated condition. GHOST RIDER 2099 (including all prominent characters featured in this issue and the distinctive likenesses thereof) is a trademark of MARVEL CHARACTERS, INC. POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO GHOST RIDER 2099, c/o MARVEL DIRECT MARKETING CORP. SUBSCRIPTION DEPT. P.O. BOX 1979 DANBURY, CT. 06813-1979 TELEPHONE # (203) 743-5331. Printed in the U.S.A.

THRVRP SKRUCHFT
AAAAUUUGHK
LIMBIC STATE: FEAR/PAIN/FEAR/ PAIN/PAIN/PAIN
MEMORY SEQUENCE TERMINATES: ARCHIVING AND INDEXING...
INITIATING COGNITIVE RECONSTRUCTION; MATCHING TO BEHAVIORAL MODIFICATION PARAMETERS
I LIVE?
YES. I'M SURE YOU HAVE A GREAT MANY QUESTIONS.
LET US START WITH THE BASICS -- YOU ARE VENGEANCE, FORMERLY KNOWN AS THE LATE COLT WAGNER OF CENTRAL SECURITY SYSTEMS.
YOU WERE SLAIN IN THE LINE OF DUTY BY THE OUTLAW KNOWN AS THE GHOST RIDER.
I AM KABAL. I HAVE ARRANGED YOUR RESURRECTION IN THIS MORE... FORMIDABLE FORM SO THAT JUSTICE MIGHT BE DONE.
IN YOUR ABSENCE, CRIME HAS RUN RAMPANT IN TRANSVERSE CITY. CITIZENS COWER IN THEIR HOMES, WHILE CRIMINALS WALK FREE.
CRIMINALS... MUST... BE PUNISHED.
OF COURSE. AND WITH YOUR ASSISTANCE, THEY WILL BE.

I HAVE FERRETED OUT THE CRIMINAL RING MASTERMINDING ORGANIZED CRIME IN THIS CITY.
NOT SURPRISINGLY, THEY OPERATE OUT OF LITTLE CALCUTTA.
INFESTED... WITH DOWNRAMP SCUM.
INDEED.
THESE PERPETRATORS HAVE BEEN PROTECTED FROM THE LAW BY A CREATURE I BELIEVE YOU KNOW... ALL TOO WELL.
THE GHOST RIDER.
YOUR MURDERER.
THAT PUNK!
I'LL KILL HIM!
WITH YOUR AID, HIS TIME WILL SOON BE OVER.
I LOOK FORWARD --


-- TO DELIVERING THE NEWS."
IT'S ONE OF THOSE DAYS WHERE THE WORLD DOESN'T SEEM TO SUCK SO BAD, Y'KNOW?
COMPARED TO L-CYPHER'S VIRTUAL HELL, IT ALL LOOKS PRETTY OKAY.
-- POLITICAL UPHEAVAL CONTINUES IN THE WAKE OF THE FALL OF THE DOOM ADMINISTRATION TODAY, FOLLOWING SPECIAL SESSIONS IN BOTH --
-- HAS UNILATERALLY RESCINDED ALL EXECUTIVE ORDERS ISSUED BY PRESIDENT DOOM DURING HIS BRIEF --
-- COMPETING TO BE THE FIRST TO RELEASE A VR GAME VERSION OF DOOM'S TERM IN OFFICE --
DOOM'S OUT!?!
YEAH, RIGHT. TEN SECOND'S OF NEWSVID'S ALL IT TAKES --
KACHAAK
-- FOR EVERYTHING TO GO SIDEWAYS ON ME.
SKRECCCCC
I'M TALKING MAJOR SYSTEMS CRASH, HERE.

.! DELIM (PARAM SET OFF) DELETE OBJECT
1...
ABRAXAS*.* (error abort rst#$x!??.*
-- WHOLE CHUNKS OF MY O/S TURNING TO GLITCHWARE!
AND STUFF... I DIDN'T KNOW WAS THERE...
IT'S LIKE I'M HEMORRHAGING LOPE INSIDE --
REMEMBER ...
IT MAY INTEREST YOU TO KNOW <SKIZZSK>
<ZRIPT> ACCOMPLISHMENT OF MY GOALS <PHZAPT>
<FSHIZT> FURTHER THEIR OWN.
<ZZOK> GHOSTWORKS MASTERS HAVE CONCLUDED <SHQUARK>
THEY HAVE THEREFORE PROVIDED ME WITH KEYWORDS WHICH ACTIVATE CERTAIN BLOCKS OF HIDDEN CODE IN YOUR PROGRAMMING.
RATSLUM CANCERPUSBAG!
DOOM MESSED WITH MY SHOCKIN' MIND!
AND THAT AIN'T EVEN HALF OF IT -- NOT EVEN THE WORST OF IT...

...THEY MADE ME FORGET --
-- THE GHOSTWORKS --
-- THEY ENCRYPTED THE MEMORIES --
-- THE STINKIN' GHOSTWORKS --
-- I REMEMBER WHAT THEY DID TO ME!
-- BUT IT'S SPEWING UP NOW --
-- I REMEMBER --
The personality template must be extensively edited.
Control factors inserted: motivational co-factors optimized.
Agreed.
However, the illusion of free will must be preserved if we are to succeed.
THEY DID THINGS TO ME, CHANGED ME --
-- EXPERIMENTED ON ME LIKE A SHOCKIN' LAB RAT!

EVERYTHING, FROM DAY ONE. ALL THAT STUFF ABOUT FIXING CIVILIZATION... TAKIN' THE JOB AS FEDERAL MARSHALL --
-- JUST ANOTHER LIE!
HAVE TO DIG UP THEIR STINKING PROGRAMMING... PURGE IT, RIP IT RIGHT THE SHOCK OUT...
APPLICATION: KENSHIRO COCHRANE
PERSONALITY CONFIGURATION.....ACCESS DENIED
BEHAVIORAL PARAMETERS.....ACCESS DENIED
MNEMONIC SPOOLER.....ACCESS DENIED
EMULATION MODE.....ACCESS DENIED
OPERATING SYSTEM.....FILE DAMAGED
SON OF A GLITCH!
KATHRAK
THE FILES ARE LOCKED!
CAN'T EVEN DEBUG MYSELF.
GOTTA DO SOMETHING.
GOTTA GET TO --

-- THE
RGODE
ANESTHESIA?!
I NEED --
WHAT YOU NEED, COCHRANE, IS TO FIND ANOTHER BAR.
WE DON'T SERVE BLACKBOOTS HERE.
C'MON. 'THESIA... I THOUGHT WE WERE FRIENDS...
YOU THOUGHT WRONG.
'SPECIALLY AFTER YOU THREW IN WITH THE MAN, TRADED YOUR STREET CRED FOR A BADGE.
JAMMIT!
I'M HURTIN' BAD.
MY WHOLE SYSTEM'S CORRUPTED...
IT IS THEIR NATURE.
SYSTEMS ARE CORRUPT.

KABAL?!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
CONFIRMING MY SUSPICIONS.
ONCE IT BECAME CLEAR THAT THERE WAS AN INFORMANT AMONGST THE UNDERNET --
-- YOUR KNOWN ASSOCIATION WITH THE GHOST RIDER IMPLICATED YOU AS THE MOST LOGICAL SUSPECT.
A WHOLLY UNACCEPTABLE SITUATION --
-- WHICH I WILL NOW RECTIFY.
NO!
SKACHOO
PTCHANG
KABAL, YOU PARANOID FLAMEBOB! I DIDN'T --

SKRAKKASH!
FORTUNATELY --
ALL RIGHT, PUNK!
-- I HAVE [redacted] FOR THIS CONTINGENCY.
YOU'RE BUSTED!
WHANG
NOW, THEN -- WHERE WERE WE?

IN THIS VAULT, THE WORLD'S [redacted] CORPORATIONS HAVE HIDDEN THINGS DANGEROUS OR EMBARRASSING TO THE ESTABLISHED ORDER.
RECENTLY, ITS SECURITY WAS BREACHED BY A GROUP OF MERCENARIES INTENT ON LIBERATING SOME OF THOSE TECHNOLOGIES.*
GR2099 #69 -- Joey
IN [redacted] ENSUING BATTLE WITH THE VAULT'S SECURITY SYSTEMS, THE SEALS ON THIS CHAMBER WERE BROKEN.
ITS CONTENTS: SEVERAL HUNDRED HUMAN MEN IN CRYONIC SUSPENSION.
POSSESSED OF MORE OPTIMISM AND READY CASH THAN REALISTIC FORESIGHT, THEY ARRANGED THIS FATE FOR THEMSELVES --
-- UNAWARE THAT HUMAN BRAIN TISSUE MIGHT BECOME SUPERCONDUCTIVE AT TEMPERATURES BELOW FORTY DEGREES KELVIN.
ZZIK
ZOP
ZKRAK
SKIPT
SKRZZK
ZPOPT
FOR NEARLY A CENTURY, THEY HAVE BEEN HORRIBLY CONSCIOUS, SLOWLY GOING MAD FROM SENSORY DEPRIVATION.
ZUPT
NOW, A HUNDRED YEARS' WORTH OF PENT-UP PSIONIC ENERGY --
-- HAS RECEIVED ITS WAKE-UP CALL.
SHZZRAKAZIKZAAK

A CHAIN REACTION ENSUES.
ONE, THE MINDS WITHIN THE HEADS ARE ABSORBED INTO A SEETHING MASS OF PSIONIC PLASMA --
-- AN ENTITY FORMED FROM PURE, CONCENTRATED PSYCHOSIS.
SHRZOP
ZZAAK
MOTHER! NOOOOOO!
ITS RAGE AND POWER STILL BUILDING, IT PASSES THROUGH THE CERAMISTEEL WALLS OF THE VAULT AS IF THEY WERE THIN --
THIS IS EARTH COINCIDENCE CONTROL CALLING..
PRAY FOR BYES
EVER CURSE TECHNOLOGY WITH EVERY FIBER OF YOUR BEING?
YOU WILL.
ACID IS GROOVY KILL THE PIGS
THAT THIS BUNCH MUST SOMEHOW FORM A FAMILY. AND THAT'S HOW THEY BECAME..
-- AND INTO THE UNSUSPECTING WORLD BEYOND.

NOT SO TOUGH! NOW, ARE YOU?
KAANGK
CAN'T HANDLE A REAL MAN.
LOUSY CHROME JOB.
LOOK WHO'S TALKING.
YOU CHECKED ANY MIRRORS LATELY?

I'M NOT LIKE YOU.
THEY PUT MY BRAIN IN THIS BODY SO I COULD TAKE YOU DOWN.
YEAH? I DIDN'T KNOW THEY MADE TWEEZERS THAT SMALL.
KRAK ZOPT
I GOT JUST THE THING FOR THAT SMART MOUTH OF YOURS.
KNOW WHAT THIS IS, PUNK?
IT'S ANTI-MATTER--

... AND YOU'RE GONNA BURN.
NGHHA QUARSHIK
NEXT: HOT METAL

HEARTBREAKER
IN
SEX
AND
VIOLENCE
KAMINSKI/WOOD/
COMICRAFT/SCHEELE/
MALIBU/CAVALIER/
CHASE
Saying "no" didn't even cross my mind.
DON'T LET THE SIGN FOOL YOU -- IT GOES BY LOTS OF NAMES.
She exudes the smell of sex and death like designer neopheromones specifically engineered to lower my IQ by 100 points.
WHAT DO YOU CALL IT?
BABES
So when she invited me to a club in the waist part of Little Calcutta, I went with her without a second thought.
I wasn't surprised that the club, like her, promised both passion and oblivion. Actually, I'd been counting on it.
ALL RIGHT, PEOPLE, GIVE IT UP FOR THE LOVELY PHASHION...
...AND HER VICTIMS!
HOME.

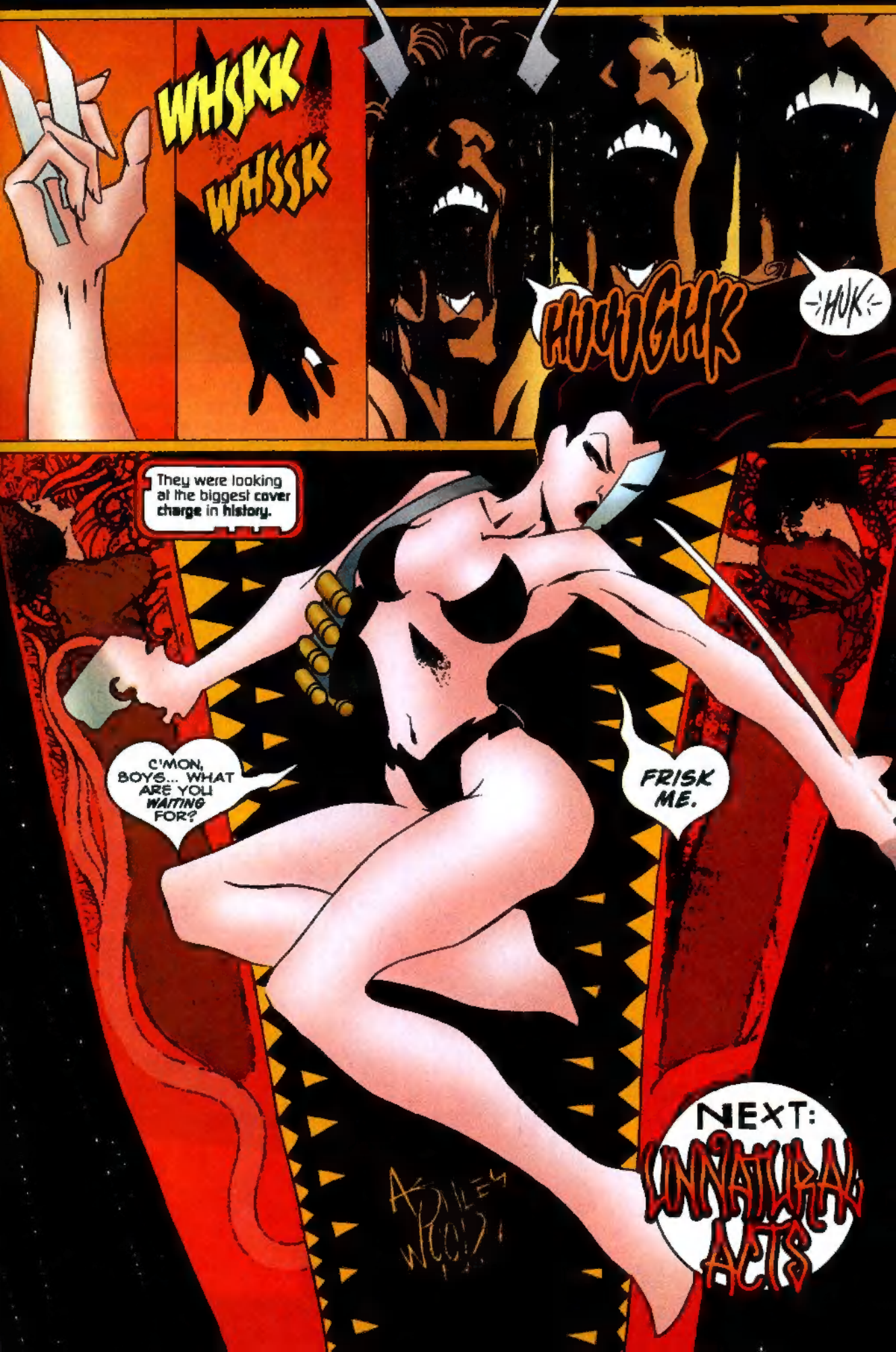
WELL, WHAT DO YOU THINK?
I THINK I NEED A DRINK.
Glimmer of sweat on undulating bodies, sharp needles of refracted light spiking off razor edges; a textbook case of avoidance/approach.
NAME YOUR POISON, HANDSOME.
ANYTHING 'CEPT CYANIDE, WE RAN OUTTA THAT HALF AN HOUR AGO.
CYANIDE?
WILL'S AN OLD-FASHIONED BOY, TRIXIE. BRING HIM A RUSSIAN ROULETTE.
The room thick with fear and desire, manufacturing by-products of a process which transmuted imminent danger into some primal aphrodisiac.
SO... YOU, um, COME HERE OFTEN?
HAHA HAHA HA
SWEETHEART, I WORK HERE.

"Manufacturing by-products?" That's not bad. Shame there's no chance [redacted] Mainline Media ever publishing any of this.
[redacted] because I signed [redacted] jammed [redacted] that gives them ownership of everything I write [redacted] perpetuity.
I SUPPOSE I SHOULD'VE FIGURED THAT.
WHAT KIND OF... um...ACT... DO YOU DO?
Oh, YOU'LL SEE IT FOR YOURSELF.
BETTER FINISH THAT UP, AND ORDER [redacted] YOU'RE GONNA [redacted] IT.
REALLY? WHY?
BECAUSE, SUGAR --
-- I'M UP NEXT.
THAT WAS REAL NAPALM...
Then again, it's not [redacted] I had a [redacted]
Since the intellectual property [redacted] took effect in '83 --
-- nobody can [redacted] to own their own opinions anymore.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN -- HEARTBREAKER!
Music thundered from the amps, a classical 4/4 beat behind shrieking guitars.
She came out wearing enough heavy ordnance to throw a quick lunchtime coup in your choice of South American narcocracies --
-- and not much else.
And then, in perfect time to the beat --
-- with a coy wink and a smile --
-- she started taking it off.
That's when I realized, as far as she was concerned --
SON OF A GLITCH...
-- she wasn't up there for the audience's amusement --

-- we were down here for hers.
-- with a coy wink and a smile --
NOBODY MOVES!
THIS IS A RAID!
GET THAT HARLOT OFF-STAGE!

Oh, WOULD YOU?
I DO SEEM TO BE HAVING A LITTLE TROUBLE --
-- GETTING OFF.
-NGHK-
-HUK-
TAKE HER DOWN!
THRAKAKAKAKAKA
She was fast, but she wasn't easy.
Rolling across the stage ahead of their bullets, she retrieved the pieces of her act, and I knew she was going to cost SHIELD big-time.
LOOK OUT!


WHSKK
WHSSK
HUUGHK
HUK
They were looking at the biggest cover charge in history.
C'MON, BOYS... WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?
FRISK ME.
NEXT: UNNATURAL ACTS

MACHINE LANGUAGE

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Out Of My Head

Congratulations, you lucky, lucky readers! You have the only copy of this issue of GHOST RIDER 2099 #21 to contain this secret "Out Of My Headitorial!" Through the miracle of ink-jetting technology, everybody else gets the lyrics to "The Loco-Motion" in this space.

Okay, here's the deal. 2099 GENESIS previews our two new series. You'll recognize it by the sharp chromium cover by Humberto Ramos 'n' Karl Kesel. Inside, Warren Ellis, Dale Eaglesham and Scott Koblish give you a glimpse of the future.

The new series? FANTASTIC FOUR 2099, by Karl Kesel, Rick Leonardi and Al Williamson. Reed, Sue, Ben and Johnny go back to the future!

And in January, X-NATION 2099, by Tom Peyer, Humberto Ramos and Jimmy Palmiotti. More mutants for your money in the the town called Halo City!

Hey! Somebody's lookin' over your shoulder! 'A chug-a-chug-a motion like a railroad train...'

Dear Machine Language,

I'm really disappointed that Heartbreaker didn't stick around longer. She was a fantastic villain for GR. I hope that her character changes appropriately as drawn by Ashley Wood.

I was glad to see Len getting away from all the monster characters for once. Heartbreaker definitely offered more of a challenge to GR than Wasteland or any of the other characters we've seen. I-Cypher and Vengeance are coming; I hope we don't see any people like the "monster of the month" formula that took over this book's middle.

Frank Wiki
Pittsburg

Yeah, I really got a great read from Heartbreaker and we could've happily kept planning more stuff for her solo series.

Dear Machine Language,

I started buying GHOST RIDER 2099 simply because I'm a fan of the best of the 2099 books. I was rather unimpressed with the book's premise. Chris Sachalo's penciling was gorgeous, but I even with that the book just didn't seem to fit anywhere within the time framework of 2099. Still, I have a complete collection, so I continued to buy and peruse. While this book has had more artists on it than I remember, and for the most part, hasn't seemed to get the real feel of the world Sachalo created. Now you have Ashley Wood, and it looks like it's going to be a long run, so I'm hoping it does find its groove and get on track. Now that I definitely like the artist of, I hope he stays.

Likewise, the stories have picked up as well. Len Kaminski's a good writer, the "One Nation Under Doom" storyline allowed Mr. Kaminski to have a little fun with the characters and get a chance to develop some.

I guess what I'm saying is, it took awhile, but GHOST RIDER 2099 has finally found its place in the future-verse.

Samuel Colby
Davie, FL

Ashley's stuff is growing on everyone, Samuel! In fact, we like it so much, as mentioned Mr. Wood will be doing a GHOST RIDER 2099 mini-series [illegible] Kobeshi Koblish, with a whole lot of characters from X-NATION 2099!

Dear Machine Language,

In response to a letter in GHOST RIDER 2099 #19, I have to humbly disagree with Josh Wickham.

I think that Ghost Rider would fight more evil characters. He's an outcast, a loner, and all the other folks in 2099 are heroes. They play one on TV. Zero's mostly any bones about not liking the establishment and he's also mentioned to himself to be a hero. The Transverse City really upset me at first because I couldn't believe that my favorite character would sell out. Then, I got ironic twist and I saw that Zero was allied to do. He was showing a true side of his character, as well as the evils of the government. The only way the government and corporations could control Zero was to destroy his spirit. That is indeed a disturbing statement on society. I'm glad, however, that Zero seems to be able to keep his rebellious spirit.

I'm happy with Josh about the next issues #13 and 14...but I realize that Higgins was around only in the interim, so no big deal. Ashley Wood was certainly well worth the wait. Good to see that GR seems to finally have a steady team. It can only help the book and improve overall cohesion.

Really enjoy the characters and villains we've been introduced to...Cypher, Heartbreaker, etc. Definitely have fruity options for them and I've finally begun to enjoy the book again.

Matthew Brock
San Juan, CA

Ghost Rider definitely is a rebel and we're glad you took so much away from reading us, Matt. We hope you continue to get as much from the book as well as enjoy all the hard work that Len, Ashley, Jim, Richard and Christie put into each month.

U.S. POSTAL SERVICE STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION
(REQUIRED BY 39 U.S.C. 3686)

1. Title of Publication: GHOST RIDER 2099
2. Publication No.: 011-666
3. Date of Filing: October 1, 1995
4. Frequency of Issue: MONTHLY
5. No. of Issues published annually: 12
6. Annual subscription price: $23.40/12 issues
7. Complete mailing address of known office of publication: 387 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10016
8. Complete mailing address of the headquarters of general business offices of the publishers: Same
9. Full names and complete mailing address of publisher, editor, and managing editor: Stan Lee, 387 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10016 Editor: Joey Cavalieri, 387 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10016 Managing Editor: N/A
10. Owner (If owned by a corporation, its name and address must be stated and also immediately thereafter the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the individual owners must be given. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, its name and address as well as that of each individual must be given. If the publication is published by a nonprofit organization, its name and address must be stated.) (Item must be completed.) 97% of the Common Stock of Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc. is owned indirectly by Andrews Group, Inc., a corporation owned by Ronald O. Perelman, 35 East 62nd Street, New York, N.Y. 10021. The remaining 3% of Marvel's Common Stock is publicly owned. The shares of Marvel's Common Stock are listed for trading on the New York Stock Exchange.
11. Known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages or other securities: None
12. For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at special rates. The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of the organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes: (Check one.) Has not changed during preceding 12 months. Has changed during preceding 12 months. (If changed, publisher must submit explanation of change with this statement.)
13. Publication Name: GHOST RIDER 2099
14. Issue date for circulation data below: NOVEMBER 1995
15. EXTENT AND NATURE OF CIRCULATION

	Average No. of copies each issue during preceding 12 months	Actual No. of single issue published nearest to filing date
A. Total No. Copies (Net Press Run)	40,972	40,972
B. Paid and/or Requested Circulation: 1) Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales	36,087	36,087
2) Paid or requested mail subscriptions	37,325	37,325
C. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation (sum of 15B(1) and 15B(2))	73,412	73,412
D. Free distribution by mail, carrier or other means: 1) Samples, complimentary, and other free copies	36,350	36,350
2) Copies distributed to news agents but not sold	750	750
E. Total Free Distribution (sum of 15D and 15E)	37,100	37,100
F. Total Distribution (sum of 15C and 15E)	110,512	110,512
G. Copies not Distributed: 1) Office use, leftovers, spoiled	1,460	1,460
2) Return from News Agents	750	750
H. Total (sum of 15G, 15H(1), and 15H(2))	112,722	112,722
I. Percent paid and/or requested circulation (15C/15G x 100)	66.36%	66.36%

16. This statement of ownership will be printed in the January issue of this publication.
17. Signature and title of editor, publisher, business manager, or owner: Joey Cavalieri, Assistant Editor, Direct Sales
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Next Issue

Uneasy lies the robotic chest that wears the badge, as Transverse City's marshall has a showdown at high noon with his new archfoe! Plus, we introduce...the Psyclone! And part two of the Heartbreaker tale!